

REMARKS

Claim Rejections

Claims 22-28 continue to stand rejected under 35 USC §102(e) as being anticipated by Mikurak, US Patent 6,671,818. For the reasons set forth hereafter, it is submitted that the claims, as amended, including new claims 29 and 30, patentably distinguish over the Mikurak '818 patent.

Patentability of the Claims

Claims 22 and 24 have been amended, claims 27 and 28 have been canceled, and claims 29 and 30 have been added. Claim 29 relates to an embodiment of Fig. 2, and claim 30 has the history-information registering means deleted from claim 29.

In rejecting claims 22-28, the Examiner cites plural portions of Mikurak and states that each structural element of the claims is disclosed therein. It is submitted, however, that the Examiner interprets too broadly each structural element of the claims to make the structural elements of the claims allegedly correspond to Mikurak.

Thus, the Examiner states that an inquiry relating to power plant techniques is disclosed in column 22. However, applicants submit that there is only a description relating to power demand in this portion. Applicants have amended the claims, however, to refer to "techniques of components of a power plant".

The Examiner further states that Mikurak discloses an answer system divided into two means, one of which is an answer system for a user and the other is an answer system for a service furnisher. Applicants believe this interpretation of

Mikurak is incorrect. In the present amendment, applicants have made clear the difference between Mikurak and the present invention by making clear provision of an answer system for a user and an answer system for a service furnisher between an internet and an answer center by interposing a firewall.

Thus, in Fig. 116 of Mikurak, a "web server" is provided at the left side of firewall 1600 of the corporate headquarters portion of the figure. However, this is not the same as the answer system for a user and the answer system for a service furnisher. It appears that the Examiner is interpreting Mikurak as disclosing an answer system for a user and an answer system for a service furnisher by the existence of customers that have a customer's terminal and a web server of a local office in addition to a web server of corporate head quarters. In order to avoid any such misunderstanding in this amendment, it is made clear to provide the answer system for a user and the answer system for a service furnisher by the internet and the answer center, by interposing the fire wall.

Moreover, in the present invention, the answer system is constructed to have the answer system for the user accessed by the user and the answer system for the service furnisher accessed by the answer center (service furnisher), and the answer system for the user and the answer system for the service furnisher each are provided with inquiry information registering means separately. This concept is not disclosed by Mikurak.


Therefore, a construction to periodically take inquiry information, received by the answer system for the user, into the answer system for the service furnisher also is not disclosed in Mikurak.

Accordingly, it is submitted the claims remaining in the application patentably distinguish over Mikurak. Reconsideration and reexamination are respectfully requested.

To the extent necessary, Applicants petition for an extension of time under 37 CFR 1.136. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, or credit any overpayment of fees, to the deposit account of Mattingly, Stanger & Malur, P.C., Deposit Account No. 50-1417 (referencing attorney docket no. NIP-216).

Respectfully submitted,

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